

Coke Ovens
Old Irontown, approximately 25 miles west
of Cedar City, via State Route 56
Iron County
Utah

HABS No. U-59

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

COKE OVENS

Location: Old Irontown (Township 37 S, Range 14, NW 1/4, Section 8) approximately 25 miles west of Cedar City, via State Route 56, Iron County, Utah.
Latitude: 37° 35' 55" N Longitude: 113° 26' 48" W

Present Owner: Stuart W. Lamb; Cedar City Chapter Sons of Utah Pioneers

Present Occupant: Abandoned

Present Use: Historic site

Statement of Significance: Typical coke oven, remains of the "Iron Mission" to Southern Utah in the 1850's and 60's.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

Section Patented by Ebenezer Hanks, July 1, 1878
Union Iron Works (1868)
Great Western Iron Mining and Jfg. Co. (1873)
Utah Iron Mfg. Co. later Iron Mfg. Co. of Utah (1881-84)
Recorded as town on June 29, 1880 (Iron City)
(County records after 1880 very incomplete)

2. Date of erection: 1869

3. Architect: None

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

The Utah Pioneers and Landmarks Association plaque at the site reads:

OLD IRONTOWN

Established 1868 by Ebenezer Hanks and others who organized the Great Western Manufacturing Co., a cooperative enterprise. Officers were E. Hanks, President; Homer Duncan, Vice-President; Seth M. Blair, Secretary. 800 lbs. of iron of good quality was produced each

8 hours, the plant running day and night. The enterprise was taken over in 1883 by the Iron Manufacturing Co. of Utah, with George Q. Cannon, President; Thomas Taylor, Vice-President and Manager; John C. Cutler, Secretary. A railroad was moved here from Nevada to haul coal from Cedar Canton to "Little Pinto", the name given this townsite.

The plaque is somewhat in error, since it was the Union Iron Works, organized in 1868, who built the charcoal kilns and two small furnaces on Pinto Creek about 25 miles southwest of Cedar City, Utah. Up to two tons of gray cast iron were produced per day, much of which was sent to the stamp mills at Bullion, Nevada. (This company was also known as the Pinto Iron Co.) The principals in the records of incorporation were: Ebenezer Hanks, Seth M. Blair, Chapman Duncan, Homer Duncan, Peter Shirts, and Robert Ritchey.

In 1873, the company was reorganized as the Great Western Iron Mining and Manufacturing Co., and considerable equipment was imported, including machinery for molding and casting iron.

A new engine house, foundry, pattern shop, business office and two new furnaces were built. Production of pig iron was increased to five tons per day, and mining machinery, stoves, flat irons and other items in demand were manufactured for shipment to Nevada and towns in Utah. The iron used in casting the twelve life-size oxen supporting the baptismal font in the Mormon Temple at St. George, Utah was produced here. It is estimated that \$200,000 was spent to produce 400 tons of pig iron before the sale of the property in 1874.

In August, 1881, the Utah Iron Mfg. Co. was organized with a capital of \$50,000. Extensive iron and coal lands operated by their predecessors were acquired, but litigation of cross-claims prevented their commencing operations until 1884, when a new company was again formed, known as the Iron Mfg. Co. of Utah. This company was partially underwritten by the Mormon Church, who subscribed to one-fourth of the \$250,000 capital stock.

This company then constructed another furnace, factory and storehouse, and also purchased the 20 mile Pioche-Bullionville Railroad in Nevada, with all its rolling stock. They moved it to Iron County and used it to transport coal to the iron works and to transport iron from Iron City to the Southern Utah Railroad at Milford, Utah.

With the need to expend greater amounts of money for development purposes, and the increasing pressures of the "Polygamy Crusade" which harassed them with increasing frequency, the Mormon Church leaders became disenchanted with the enterprise and withdrew their support. The project was abandoned and never revived; only one coke oven and some building ruins remain. Except for the actual site of the ovens, the section belongs to Stuart W. Lamb.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Abstracts of Titles, Iron County Courthouse, Parowan, Utah.

Record of Incorporations, Iron County Courthouse, Book A.

Site Plaque, Utah Pioneers and Landmarks Association.

2. Bibliography:

Arrington, Leonard J. Great Basin Kingdom, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1958.

Deseret News, Salt Lake City; May 10 and June 18, 1870, August 30, 1871.

Larson, Gustive O. "Bulwark of the Kingdom, Utah's Iron and Steel Industry," Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1963, Utah Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Salt Lake City Directory and Business Guide for 1869, E. J. Sloan and Co., 1869.

Salt Lake Herald, Salt Lake City, December 16, 1871.

Prepared by John L. Giusti, AIA
August 1, 1968

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: Early industrial structure typifying coke ovens at other sites in Utah.

2. Condition of fabric: Intact

B. Description:

1. Over-all dimensions: Circular in plan, this beehive-shaped structure reaches an interior height of 20' 10".
2. Foundations: Sandstone
3. Wall and roof construction: Red sandstone below, brick pointed dome above.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry
5. Chimneys: Rectangular opening high in dome.
6. Openings - doorways and doors: Segmental arched opening at west.

C. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: Door opening faces approximately west. Site is remote from present habitations or highways.
2. Outbuildings: Ruin of similar coke oven adjoins north and a little east. Ruins (foundations) of other buildings extend to the west.
3. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: The general area of Old Irontown is enclosed by a wire fence. A turnstile is near the coke oven, convenient to the parking area where the dirt road ends.

Prepared by Paul Goeldner
Supervisory Architect
Utah Project
July 18, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA (Texas Tech University) assisted by Project Historian John L. Giusti, AIA (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah) and Donald G. Prycer, (Texas A. & M. University).